

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 NEA-10 EB-11 SSO-00 OMB-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19

IO-14 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /177 W

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R 301400Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4982

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 0948

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BG/IS

SUBJECT: GABON/ISRAEL RELATIONS

REF: LIBREVILLE 0942

1. FONMIN RAWIRI ASKED ME TO COME BY HIS HOME LAST EVENING OCTOBER 29. HE LAUNCHED INTO AN OBVIOUSLY PAINFUL (FOR HIM) EXPLANATION OF GOG DECISION RE ISRAEL. HE SAID IT WAS NOT A "BREAK" IN RELATIONS BUT MERELY A "SUSPENSION" UNTIL ARAB TERRITORIES EVACUATED BY ISRAEL. HE HOPED MIDEAST PROBLEM WOULD BE SETTLED SOON AND THAT CURRENT ISRAELI AMBASSADOR WOULD RETURN. RAWIRI EXPLAINED THAT FOR GOG IT WAS MATTER OF OAU SOLIDARITY DESPITE FACT GOG CONSIDERED ARABS AS "FALSE BROTHERS" (FAUX FRERES) AND ISRAELIS AS "GOOD FRIENDS."

2. ISRAELI AMBASSADOR ARRIVED AS I WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE AND FONMIN WENT OVER SAME GROUND WITH HIM. ISRAELI AMBASSADOR THANKED MINISTER FOR KINDNESS SHOWN HIM BY GOG SINCE ARRIVAL BUT WENT ON TO SAY HE THOUGHT GOG MAKING MISTAKE IN SEVERING RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL FOR TWO REASONS: (A) IT SERVED NO USEFUL PURPOSE TOWARD PROMOTING PEACE, BUT
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ON CONTRARY HARDENED ARAB INTRANSIGENCE IN UPCOMING NEGO-

TIATIONS, THEREBY MAKING PEACE MORE DIFFICULT, AND (B) IT DEALT BLOW TO GABON AS COUNTRY OPEN TO SPIRIT OF DIALOGUE AND INTERESTED IN FOREIGN INVESTMENTS. HE INTIMATED THAT PICTURE OF STABILITY WHICH WAS KEY ASSET OF COUNTRIES LIKE GABON (AND IVORY COAST) WOULD BE TARNISHED WITH INEVITABLE REPERCUSSIONS IN FUTURE INVESTORS.

3. FONMIN DID NOT REPLY DIRECTLY TO ISRAELI POINTS BUT AGAIN STRESSED THAT GABON CONSIDERED ITSELF FRIEND OF ISRAEL AND HAD NOT BROKEN WITH ISRAEL DURING FIGHTING BUT ONLY WHEN VIRTUALLY COMPELLED BY ACTIONS OF ALMOST ALL OTHER OAU MEMBERS.

4. MEDIA TREATMENT OF "SUSPENSION" OF RELATIONS PLACED ACCENT ON ISRAELI "INTRANSIGENCE" DESPITE GOG APPEALS.

5. ISRAEL WAS ON VERGE OF MAKING SIZEABLE INVESTMENTS IN GABON WHICH, OF COURSE, WILL NOW COME TO NAUGHT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS INTERRUPTION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973LIBREV00948
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS MCKESSON
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LIBREVILLE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973105/aaaaaddy.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LIBREVILLE 0942
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <28-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GABON/ISRAEL RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, GB, IS, OAU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005